



Little Stanney & District Parish Council

(Parishes of Croughton, Little Stanney, Stoak and Wervin)

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Tuesday 24 May 2022 in Little Stanney Village Hall

Present: Cllrs David Astbury, Linda Carter, Paul Carter, Peter Hartshorn, Clive Lipscombe, Peter Mountford, Judith Thomas and Michael Todd

In attendance: Mrs Pauline English (Parish Clerk)

Cllr Michael Todd (in the Chair)

22.48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs John Jones (holiday) and Mark Parry (work)

22.49 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Michael Todd was proposed by Cllr Linda Carter and seconded by Cllr Paul Carter; Cllr David Astbury was proposed by Cllr Judith Thomas and seconded by Cllr Peter Hartshorn. It was resolved that the vote should be taken by show of hands.

RESOLVED: That by 5 votes to 3 with no abstentions Cllr Michael Todd be elected Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2022-23

22.50 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr David Astbury was proposed by Cllr Peter Hartshorn and seconded by Cllr Judith Thomas. There being no further nominations, and all in agreement, Cllr David Astbury was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the year 2022-23.

22.51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

22.52 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

There were no members of the public present.

22.53 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

22.54 FINANCE

RESOLVED: That

- (1) expenditure since the last meeting to year end on 31 March 2022 be noted as follows:

25.03.22	BACS	Amenity Cleaner – expenses March	47.25
25.03.22	BACS	Parish Clerk – expenses March	86.54
28.03.22	SO	Parish Clerk – salary March	199.96
28.03.22	SO	Amenity Cleaner – wages March	329.34
31.03.22	BACS	Morral Play Services–RoSPA Inspection of play area	54.00
31.03.22	Bank	Service Charge	18.00
Total			735.09

Reconciliation Opening balance	14,023.09
Add: Income	0
Less: Expenditure	<u>735.09</u>
Closing balance	<u>13,288.00</u>

- (2) expenditure from 1 April 2022 to 17 May 2022 be noted as follows:

04.04.22	BACS	Cheshire Association of Local Councils – affiliation	147.96
28.04.22	SO	Parish Clerk-salary April	203.42
28.04.22	SO	Amenity Cleaner-wages April	343.20
29.04.22	BACS	Amenity Cleaner-expenses April	28.35
			722.93

- (3) income received since 1 April 2022 be noted as follows:

08.04.22	Cheshire West & Chester Council – Precept	10,000.00
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Reconciliation: Opening Balance	13,288.00
Add: Income	10,000.00
Less: expenditure	<u>722.93</u>
Closing Balance	<u>22,565.07</u>

- (4) **Approval to the use of BACS payments**

The Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014 provided the opportunity for Parish Councils to make payments by BACS transfer provided such payments are authorised by the Parish Council. The Parish Council had been using this method of payment very successfully since the order was made and it was the preferred option for many organisations.

RESOLVED: That payment by BACS be continued in 2022-23

- (5) **Bank Signatories**

Since the Parish Council last approved signatories to the Unity Trust bank account there have been a number of changes to the membership of the Council.

RESOLVED: That Cllrs David Astbury, Michael Todd and Judith Thomas be signatories to the bank account along with the Parish Clerk.

- (6) **Savings Account**

The Parish Council held funds throughout the year in a current account with Unity Trust Bank plc which did not earn anything.

RESOLVED: That a Savings Account be opened with Unity Trust Bank plc and the majority of funds be kept in this account, allowing monthly transfers to be made to the current account to meet payments.

22.55 INTERNAL AUDIT

Some issues had arisen with regard to income tax which were currently being addressed on behalf of the Parish Council by Barnes Cooper Ltd. To ensure these issues did not arise in the future it was proposed to appoint a company to process the payroll for the Parish Council. Chester Payroll Services Ltd was recommended by the Internal Auditor. RESOLVED: That Chester Payroll Services Ltd be appointed to process the Parish Council's Payroll with effect from May 2022.

22.56 AGAR 2021-22

The Internal Auditor was unable to complete his AGAR form in time to approve the AGAR documents at this meeting. As the deadline for submitting the AGAR was 1 July it was proposed to hold a meeting of the Parish Council in June for the purpose of signing off the AGAR documents.

RESOLVED: That a meeting of the Parish Council be held on Tuesday 28 June at which the AGAR documents should be signed off.

22.57 INSURANCE

A renewal quotation had been received from the Parish Council's current insurers, Zurich. The premium this year would be £364.43 which was £3.62 more than last year for the same cover.

RESOLVED: That the quotation from Zurich be accepted.

22.58 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RESOLVED: That the following policies and procedures be renewed as set out in the documents circulated to the Parish Councillors:

- (1) Standing Orders
- (2) Financial Regulations
- (3) Complaints Procedure
- (4) Data Protection and Information Security Policy
- (5) Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- (6) Discipline, Dismissal and Grievance Policy
- (7) Equality and Diversity Policy
- (8) Freedom of Information – Publication Scheme
- (9) Health & Safety Policy
- (10) Scheme of Delegation

22.59 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Parish Council was entitled to one representative on the Protos Community Forum. The current representative was Cllr Mark Parry and it was proposed that he continue in this role.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Mark Parry should continue to represent the Parish Council on the Protos Community Forum.

22.60 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Police and Crime Commissioner wished to commence a regular programme of consistent engagement with the Town and Parish Councils within Cheshire and had invited the Chairman of the Parish Council or a nominated representative to a CWaC PCC Town and Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 24 May 2022 at Cheshire Police HQ in Winsford.

This invitation provided an opportunity for the Parish Council to consider allocating responsibilities such as police liaison to individual Members and it was proposed that this be included on the agenda for the July meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) It be noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner has been informed that Little Stanney & District Parish Council was unable to be represented at the meeting on 24 May as it coincided with the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, but that the Parish Council would like to be invited to any future meetings; and
- (2) Members consider appropriate areas of responsibility to be allocated to individual Councillors and send suggestions to the Parish Clerk for the next meeting.

22.61 RECEIPT OF AGENDA ETC BY EMAIL

Every year Councillors were required to give their approval to receiving meeting documents by electronic means.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Clerk notes that Cllrs Hartshorn, Parry and Todd are willing to receive agenda, minutes and background documents solely by electronic means and the remaining Cllrs wish to receive both electronic and paper copies of these documents.

22.62 HIGHWAYS, RIGHTS OF WAY AND AMENITY CLEANING

- (1) **Automated Speed Assessment Device, Whitby Lane:** The following response had been received from Stuart Bateman, Principal Engineer, CWaC to the Parish Council's request for consideration of the siting of an automated speed assessment

device on Whitby Lane. “There are two types of interactive device (1) Devices that show the actual speed of vehicles (Speed Indicator Devices) are not currently permitted on the highway unless they are only in situ on a temporary basis i.e. for 3 months of the year. At this time the authority discourages their implementation. They are not an approved Department for Transport sign for permanent inclusion on the Highway. (2) Permanent devices that show the speed limit of the road you are travelling (Vehicle Activated Signs). They are to be fully funded by the promotor and typically cost £7k-£10k, subject to suitability assessment. Please let me know if you want me to investigate further.”

RESOLVED: That CWaC be asked to clarify in more detail whether Whitby Lane would meet the criteria for a vehicle activated sign and how much this would cost.

- (2) **Replacement of Barriers at top of Croughton Road, Stoak:** The following response has been received from Stuart Bateman, Principal Engineer, CWaC. “I’ll need to look into this further and will attend site to take a look. The lane is adopted highway for its full extent (as shown below) and without a legal Order to prohibit driving it should not have been barriered off. I cannot find evidence that an Order has been made and that may well be the reason for their removal. Do you know when the bollards were installed?” The Parish Council believed that the barriers had been put in place around 10 years ago following an increase in the amount of rubbish that was being dumped in the area that had been left when Croughton Road was split by the M56 motorway.

RESOLVED: That CWaC be asked to draw up a legal Order for the prohibition of driving at the top of Croughton Road and that the area be barriered off to prevent access by vehicles.

- (3) **Who is now responsible for Public Rights of Way?** Reply-PROW officers are responsible for clearance of bridleways. However, please note we only provide one cut per year. Specific issues with Public Rights of Way should be raised via the website.

RESOLVED: That the responsibility for Public Rights of Way be noted

22.63 PLANNING

RESOLVED: That

- (1) CWaC be informed that the Parish Council wishes to object to the following application on the grounds set out below:

Application No.	Subject	Location
22/01150/OUT	To erect two portal-framed buildings comprising cafe, offices, toilets/changing and storage facilities, together with ancillary structures, site works and landscaping	Cheshire Oaks Fisheries, Strawberry Way West, Backford, Chester CH1 6PN

Since the original application (10/12984/FUL) was approved in 2011 very little has actually been done on this site. Of the four channels originally intended only one is in use and that only by a very small number of people. Most of the time the site is empty.

There has been very little attempt to landscape the site to make it appealing to would-be fishermen. The ugly earth mound that was put in place as a boundary between the site and the neighbouring houses on Whitby Lane but was intended to be removed once the site was completed, is still there and, if anything, has grown in size. It is now overgrown with weeds which is unacceptable so close to the residential dwellings.

There has been no maintenance of any kind undertaken on a large part of the site.

The original application granted approval for a small timber chalet with reception, toilet and changing facilities and limited storage. This building has been relegated to a storage shed. It seems that it has never been used as it was originally intended.

It is stated that the intention was to develop the site as a long term project when finances allowed. It has now been 11 years since work started on the site and there is no sign of it being 'developed'. If finances are now available to allow the erection of additional buildings, why are these not being spent on the site to develop it for fishing.

This new application is proposing that a building is added to the site to provide a café with six offices above it. Given the current footfall on the site one must ask who are the potential users of a café and who are the intended users of the offices? The location of the fishery is such that it cannot rely on passing trade because no-one (except perhaps local dog walkers) passes the site, and if the current trend prevails there would not be sufficient people using the one fishing lake to support a café.

The last paragraph of the Notice of Planning Permission for application number 10/12984/FUL states that "the applicant should be made aware that given the Green Belt location of the site further buildings on the site are unlikely to be approved unless a case for very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development in the green belt can be demonstrated."

The Parish Council objects to this application on the grounds that the proposed building is inappropriate development in the Green Belt because of its size. It is two storeys high and will overlook the residential properties on Whitby Lane backing onto the site. Residents already overlook the storage area to the west of site that resembles a builders/contractor's yard with diggers etc on view, which is contrary to the requirements of the permission issued in 2011.

The Parish Council also objects on the grounds that the need for such a building has not been established. Have local people been canvassed? Would anyone want to visit a café in this location?

The Parish Council's view is that the owner of the site should fulfil the requirements of the original planning permission before seeking to increase the number of buildings on the site. The original intention of the site was to provide the fishing lakes, not to provide facilities for the general public in the form of a café and offices for unknown use.

- (2) the following decisions made by CWaC since the last meeting of the Parish Council be noted:

Application No.	Subject	Location	Status
22/00722/FUL	Erection of storage bay walls and replacement hard surfacing area	Westland Horticulture, South Road, Stanlow, Ellesmere Port	Approved
22/00583/HHE	Single storey rear extension	Belden, Strawberry Cross, Whitby Lane, Backford, Chester CH1 6PH	Prior approval not required
21/03895/FUL	Extensions to a building following demolition of existing (reference 21/01282/DEM)	Westland Horticulture, South Road, Stanlow, Ellesmere Port, CH65 4LB	Approved

- (3) the following applications still awaiting a decision be noted and Ward Cllr Graham Heatley be requested to ascertain the reasons why there were still so many applications on this list in Little Stanney & District

Application No.	Subject	Location
21/01494/FUL	Single storey extension to rear, first floor loft conversion with roof terrace, porch to front and modernisation to front elevation.	Belden Strawberry Cross Whitby Lane Backford Chester CH1 6PH
21/01523/HED	Removal of Hedgerow to increase security at the Farm	Lime Tree Farm, Stanney Lane, Little Stanney, Chester CH2 4HT
21/01530/FUL	Change of use of agricultural land to car sales and erection of a fence - retrospective	Lime Tree Farm, Stanney Lane, Little Stanney, Chester CH2 4HT
21/03108/FUL	Free standing rear timber sundeck - retrospective	Stoak Cottage, Little Stanney Lane, Stoak, Chester, Cheshire CH2 4HW
21/03611/FUL	Erection of six commercial buildings (use classes E, B2 and B8) together with the creation of accesses, parking and associated works.	Land Off New Bridge Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire
22/00024/FUL	Extension and alterations to existing dwelling to provide a large family home	The Paddock, Wervin Road, Wervin, Chester CH2 4BP
22/00272/FUL	Change of Use of Existing C3 residential Dwelling and redundant agricultural Barns into (Class C1) Holiday Cottages and (Class E(b)) Cafe/Tea Rooms	Top Farm, Croughton Road, Croughton, Chester CH2 4DA

22.64 PLAYING FIELD AND NATURE PARK

The Clerk had reported the poor condition of the fencing between the Parish Council's playing field and Bunbury Close to Sanctuary Group. On 28 April they replied that the Clerk's email had been sent to their Housing team who would investigate and repair the fencing, however it was noted that no work had yet been done to repair the fence. It was reported in the meeting that there appeared to be some new fencing in this location, but it was not clear whether this had been erected by Sanctuary or by the occupants of the properties. .

RESOLVED: That the Clerk should check with Sanctuary whether the new fencing had been erected by them or the occupants of the properties

22.65 FOLLOW UP ON ISSUES RAISED AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(1) **Licence to permit planting and maintenance of the Highway verge:** CWaC had sent a draft Licence for the Parish Council's approval and signature

RESOLVED: That the Licence be approved and signed by the Parish Clerk on behalf of the Parish Council.

(2) **Licence to site a bench on the grass verge on Stanney Lane:** The Clerk had written to Mr Willis regarding his request to site a bench outside "Springfields" on Stanney Lane. CWaC had informed the Parish Council that the bench must be purchased by the Parish Council who would be provided with the Licence. The Parish Council would be reimbursed for the net cost of the bench by Mr Willis, and he would take responsibility for maintaining it but it would belong to the Parish

Council. This information had been passed on to Mr Willis and he had been requested to confirm that he wished to proceed. A reply was awaited.

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council should apply for a licence to site a bench on the grass verge outside "Springfields".

22.66 ITEMS RAISED BY COUNCILLORS FOR INFORMATION/NEXT MEETING

- (1) A request was made to see a copy of the Faults reporting matrix proposed by Cllr Parry.
- (2) As there had been no applications to fill the vacancy in Wervin it was proposed to extend the date for applications and to consider these at the meeting in June.

22.67 MEETINGS IN 2022-23

There was a short debate on whether or not it would be a good idea to return to monthly meetings. There was mixed opinion on this, some Councillors favouring monthly meetings and others happy with the current bi-monthly meetings. The suggestion was made that the Parish Council should return to monthly meetings for a trial period, after which time the success or otherwise of this decision should be reviewed. RESOLVED: That

- (1) meetings be reintroduced on a monthly basis (except August) for six months after which time this decision would be reviewed.
- (2) the dates for meetings of the Parish Council in 2022-23 be confirmed as 2022 on 28 June, 26 July, 27 September, 25 October and 22 November and in 2023 on 24 January, 28 March and 23 May (this date to be checked with CWaC as it would follow the Parish Council elections)
- (3) the Annual Parish Meeting in 2023 be held in April
- (4) Little Stanney Village Hall be confirmed as the venue for meetings
- (5) the starting time of meetings be confirmed as 7.15pm